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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 000204

SIPDIS

NEA-I/POL FOR WILLIAM CAVNESS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MOSCOW "DISMAYED" BY POLITICAL SITUATION IN BAGHDAD

REF: STATE 05980

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Susan Elliott for reasons 1  
.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) We delivered reftel points to Iraq Section Chief Iliya Morgounov of the MFA's Middle East and North Africa Department. Characterizing the current political situation in Baghdad as strange, Morgounov noted that the GOR was surprised and disappointed by events in Baghdad leading up to the March elections. He claimed that neither the Embassy in Baghdad nor the MFA was able to understand what was behind the attempt to prohibit participation of more than 500 candidates. Morgounov said Moscow was especially dismayed because he thought the Iraqi government had "moved beyond" the historical Shia and Sunni conflicts and found a way to work together. He inquired about Vice President Biden's recent visit to Baghdad and asked if the U.S. had been successful in "teaching the Iraqis democracy again."

¶2. (C) Morgounov said DFM Saltanov himself would consider reftel request and develop a response. He said the MFA would inform the Russian Embassy in Baghdad of their strategy, and would instruct them to contact the U.S. Embassy and UNAMI as necessary. In response to a question about the possibility of joint P5 demarches to the Iraqi government, we advised that our goal at this time was instead for each capital to consider appropriate ways to express their concerns about the situation and suggested private discussions or public statements from capitals as preferred methods.  
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